

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

TRIBUTE TO CHUCK TURNER

HON. HAROLD ROGERS

OF KENTUCKY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Mr. ROGERS of Kentucky. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sorrow that I rise today to recognize Chuck Turner, a longtime Appropriations Committee professional staff member, who sadly passed away on December 8.

Chuck was a skillful appropriator, a beloved colleague, and a steadfast public servant. His 40-year career was dedicated to serving Congress, the Capitol Hill community, and the American people.

Chuck began his long career on Capitol Hill working for the Library of Congress, first in the U.S. Copyright Office, then in the Library's Financial Services Office, where he handled budget issues.

For the better part of the last 32 years, Chuck worked with the House Appropriations Legislative Branch Subcommittee: first on detail from the Library of Congress, and then—after proving himself to be invaluable—as senior staff for the Subcommittee.

His concern for and commitment to the Legislative Branch underscored everything he did. He consistently put the Committee and his work for the House before anything else.

He made sure that Members of Congress have the resources they need to do their legislative work on behalf of the American people. In particular, he maintained a deep affection for the Library of Congress—ensuring its work and collections remain available to the public and to the Members who rely on its information to do their jobs.

He also ensured that all who entered the Capitol Complex—be it staff, visitors, or the Members themselves—are safe—protected by a well-equipped Capitol Police force, in solid and secure facilities. His life's work can be felt each time you set foot in the Capitol Complex.

Chuck was recognized for his expertise and good work on more than one occasion. He was called upon to serve as a Special Investigator for the Select Committee to Investigate the Preparation for and Response to Hurricane Katrina. He took part in a staff delegation to Indonesia to help train members of the Indonesian parliament and their staff on the legislative budget process. And for several years, he not only worked with the House Legislative Branch Subcommittee, but he also helped the Senate with writing their Legislative Branch Appropriations bill.

Chuck was truly the epitome of a devoted public servant—he worked until the very end.

On a more personal level, Chuck was beloved by all those he worked with. His kindness, consideration, easy sense of humor, and loyal friendship is something that all could aspire to. The Legislative Branch, the House, and the Appropriations Committee will be a lesser place without him.

I want to thank Chuck for his decades of service, and for leaving his final mark on this

institution—the Legislative Branch bill that will be a part of the final, fiscal year 2016 omnibus legislation. His presence will be deeply missed in the halls of the Capitol.

TRIBUTE TO KAY RAYMOND

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Kay Raymond, of Creston, Iowa, for being selected as Creston Volunteer of the Year for 2015.

Kay spent a number years teaching special education before retiring 12 years ago. After retirement, Kay decided to use her free time to continue giving back to her community. Now she volunteers numerous hours a week as a volunteer for Friends of the Library, as a member and volunteer at the YMCA, and also gives back as a member of her church and at other local organizations.

Mr. Speaker, Kay's dedication to her community and her fellow Iowans is a true testament to her character. Her efforts embody the Iowa spirit and I am honored to represent her and Iowans like her in the United States Congress. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Kay for her achievements and wishing her nothing but continued success.

RECOGNIZING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF PHIL ROMANO

HON. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, tonight I want to recognize the life and achievements of a brilliant and fascinating man—Phil Romano. Now, although Mr. Romano is not originally from Texas, he falls into the category of people who moved there as quickly as he could. A man that cannot easily be entertained, Mr. Romano bounced around the country before making Dallas his home, and bounced through multiple successful business projects before settling with a self-proclaimed and modest title: entrepreneur. However, Mr. Romano is much more than an entrepreneur. He is rich in character, and Dallas is proud to be his home.

Mr. Romano is best known for his successful career in the restaurant industry. His business ventures brought Texas as well as the nation beloved institutions such as Fuddruggers, Romano's Macaroni Grill, and Eatzi's. These business ventures solidified his status as a successful businessman, but Mr. Romano helped satisfy much more than people's appetites.

When Mr. Romano was working with a small venture capital firm SHD Management

LLC, he had the keen eye to spot a good product. After talking to a cardiologist named Julio Palmaz, Mr. Romano agreed to invest capital and run the business operations for the balloon-expandable heart stent. It ended up becoming over a 10 million dollar invention, but more impressively than that, it saved countless lives, including Mr. Romano's, who now uses a heart stent after he helped invent it. When he worked in the restaurant industry he touched people's stomachs, and when he was a venture capitalist he touched people's hearts.

However, his success is most tangible in the impact he has on Dallas. His most recent project, Trinity Groves, will provide a community space for entrepreneurs to grow, businesses to invest, and people to enjoy. In addition to that, his affinity for art, embodied not only in his home but in his studio on Dragon Street in Dallas, will solidify his legacy as a brilliant and deep man.

Mr. Speaker, whether it was with a burger, a heart stent, a community, or a painting, throughout his life, Phil Romano has left a Texas-sized impression on Dallas, the city he loves that loves him back.

THE CHRISTIAN AND YEZIDI GENOCIDE

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, each day, our newspapers, magazines, radios and television screens are filled with images of people fleeing territory controlled by the Islamic jihadist group known as the Islamic State of al-Sham, or ISIS.

More than half of the 635,000 refugees—an estimated 53 percent—in Europe are from Syria alone, according to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees or UNHCR.

While violence plays the major role in the impetus of Syrians to leave their homes, Shelly Pitterman of the UNHCR testified at a hearing I chaired on October 20th that the main trigger for flight from refugee camps or shelter in nations like Jordan is the humanitarian funding shortfall. In recent months, he told us that the World Food Programme cut its program by 30 percent, and the current Syrian Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan for 2015 is only 41 percent funded. The UNHCR expects to receive just 47 percent of the funding it needs for Syria over the next year.

One year ago this month, the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs issued a report that detailed a worsening humanitarian situation in Syria. An estimated 12.21 million were in need of humanitarian assistance, including 7.6 million internally displaced people and more than 5.6 million children in need of assistance. An estimated 4.8 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance in hard to reach areas

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.

and locations. Those numbers have not improved as the conflict has continued.

By the third international pledging conference on March 31, 2015, the crisis had become the largest displacement crisis in the world, with 3.8 million people having fled to Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq and Egypt, in addition to those internally displaced. In support of the Syria Response Plan and the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan, international donors pledged US\$3.8 billion. However, according to the Financial Tracking Service at the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs or OCHA, only \$1.17 billion of \$2.89 billion in the plan had been received as of December 7th. This constitutes only 41% of what is considered necessary by OCHA.

Last week's hearing focused on the plight of persecuted religious minorities in Syria and Iraq, which constitutes genocide, and the failure of much of the international community to live up to their pledges of humanitarian assistance, factors which "push" refugees to Europe and beyond. In particular, we will examine violence targeting religious minorities such as Christians and Yazidis (a non-Islamic religious minority) in territory controlled by ISIS in Syria and Iraq.

This past September, the Simon-Skjoldt Center for the Prevention of Genocide at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum undertook a "Bearing Witness" trip to northern Iraq to investigate allegations of genocide being committed by ISIS. In a report entitled "Our Generation is Gone" The Islamic State's Targeting of Iraqi Minorities in Nineveh," the report stated that: "Based upon the public record and private eyewitness accounts, we believe the self-proclaimed Islamic State (IS) perpetrated crimes against humanity, war crimes, and ethnic cleansing against Christian, Yazidi, Turkmen, Shabak, Sabaeen-Mandaeen, and Kaka'i people in Nineveh province between June and August 2014. In our interviews, we heard accounts of the forcible transfer of populations, severe deprivation of physical liberty, rape, sexual slavery, enslavement, and murder perpetrated in a widespread and systematic manner that indicates a deliberate plan to target religious and ethnic minorities. Some specific communities—notably the Yazidi, but also Shia Shabak and Shia Turkmen—were targeted for attack."

Mirza Ismail, Chairman and Founder of the Yazidi Human Rights Organization-International, testified that the Yazidis are on the verge of annihilation.

Chaldean Bishop Francis Kalabat testified that, "There are countless Christian villages in Syria who have been taken over by ISIS and have encountered genocide and the Obama administration refuses to recognize their plight."

Carl Anderson, Supreme Knight of the Knights of Columbus, calls on the Obama administration to publicly acknowledge that genocide is taking place against the Christian communities of Iraq and Syria. Mr. Anderson testified that "vulnerable religious minorities fear taking shelter in the camps of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees because of religiously motivated violence and intimidation inside the camps." "Syrian Christians", he notes, "and other vulnerable minorities are disproportionately excluded from the U.S. Syrian Refugee Resettlement Program due to reliance on a functionally discriminatory UNHCR program."

Dr. Gregory Stanton, President of Genocide Watch and research professor at George Mason University, in his testimony entitled "Weak Words Are Not Enough", he states, "Failure to call ISIS' mass murder of Christians, Muslims, and other groups in addition to Yazidis by its proper name—genocide—would be an act of denial as grave as U.S. refusal to recognize the Rwandan genocide in 1994."

The administration reportedly is considering declaring the ISIS treatment of Yazidis to be genocide, but there is no indication that Christians will be included. That's absurd. Such an action would be contrary to the facts and tragically wrong. Last year, a United Nations resolution determined that both Yazidis and Christians were being particularly targeted by ISIS.

A group of Christian leaders recently wrote to Secretary of State John Kerry to present their case for treating Christians the same as Yazidis in this matter, but they have not received a reply thus far.

As we attempt to end the ISIS threat, we must consider how to help ensure religious pluralism in Syria and Iraq in the future. That will not be an easy task since animosities have grown during the conflicts in Iraq and Syria, exponentially so during the rise and reign of terror of ISIS. Nevertheless, unless we consider how to help make these lands safe for religious minorities, we will continue to see them chased out of their traditional areas even if there is no ISIS.

Our witnesses last week provided us a picture of the ongoing struggle faced by religious minorities in ISIS territory, and hopefully, they will help us to begin the discussion of making these areas safe for their people in the years to come.

TRIBUTE TO GRACIE RUSSELL

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Gracie Russell for being selected as the Creston Youth of the Year. Gracie is the daughter of Rob and Julie Russell.

Gracie is a senior at Creston High School and is active in FFA, volleyball, basketball, tennis, and the National Honor Society. She's also active in the community, volunteering her time with the Appalachian Service Project, Union County Youth Council, St. Malachy Youth Group, Douglas Boosters 4-H Club, and Iowa Junior Beef Breeds Association. Gracie has also participated in Meals from the Heartland, roadside cleanup, Rectory Rerun time, painting at McKinley Park, decorating the restored Creston Depot for Christmas activities, Balloon Days pedal pull time, Halloween safety at Early Childhood Center, planting trees around the community, and Open Table.

Mr. Speaker, the example set by Gracie is one all Iowans should strive for. Her willingness to serve truly embodies the Iowa spirit and I am honored to represent her and Iowans like her in the United States Congress. I ask that all of my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Gracie for this achievement and wishing her nothing but continued success.

HOUSTON'S BEST FROM TX-22

HON. PETE OLSON

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Mr. OLSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate Darius Anderson from George Ranch High School for being named the Touchdown Club of Houston's Offensive Player of the Year.

This running back sure can run. During his award winning senior year, Darius has rushed for over 1,700 yards and has 27 touchdowns. A young man of character and a strong work ethic, he no doubt makes his parents, coaches, and teachers proud. The next trophy in his sights? The football state championship trophy he and his teammates will compete for this weekend. Best of luck to Darius and his Longhorn teammates.

On behalf of the Twenty-Second Congressional District of Texas, congratulations to Darius for all of his success. We look forward to seeing where his football career takes him.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LOUISE McINTOSH SLAUGHTER

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Ms. SLAUGHTER. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained and missed Roll Call vote number 694. Had I been present, I would have voted aye on Roll Call vote number 694.

TRIBUTE TO CURT TURNER

HON. DAVID YOUNG

OF IOWA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

Mr. YOUNG of Iowa. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and congratulate Curt Turner, of Creston, Iowa, for being selected as the Creston Citizen of the Year.

Curt Turner graduated from Diagonal High School as valedictorian and attended the United States Air Force Academy Preparatory School in Colorado Springs. He moved to Creston in 1978 and opened his own insurance agency, American Family Insurance, in 1986. By the time Curt retired in 2008, he had led the company nationally in farm sales for 10 consecutive years. During his 22 years of working in insurance, he was also a major contributor to the Creston community. He was a member of the Elks, served on the school board from 1990–1999, remains an active member of his church, and in his retirement, continues to serve the community as a local Seniors' Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP) volunteer.

Mr. Speaker, Curt's dedication to his community and willingness to serve represents all that is great with our state. His efforts embody the Iowa spirit and I am honored to represent him and Iowans like him in the United States Congress. I ask that my colleagues in the United States House of Representatives join me in congratulating Curt for his achievements and wishing him nothing but continued success.